

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

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INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00

AID-20 NIC-01 RSR-01 CU-04 /152 W
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FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1282

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 143

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, NS

SUBJECT: STRIKE SITUATION

REF: PARAMARIBO 139

SUMMARY: A GOVERNMENT ATTEMPT TO REOPEN THE SCHOOLS OVER THE HEADS OF THE STRIKING UNIONS HAS RUN INTO A COMPROMISE PROPOSAL BY THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE. THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN MAY THUS BE STILLBORN, AT LEAST UNTIL GOVERNMENT AND LABOR EXAMINE THE COMPROMISE PROPOSAL. REPORTEDLY, WHILE AT LEAST SOME UNIONS COULD AGREE TO THE COMPROMISE, THERE IS SOME DOUBT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL ACCEPT IT. END SUMMARY.

1. AT GOS CABINET MEETING OF 27 MARCH, WHICH LASTED TILL 10 P. M., NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED REGARDING SUBSTANCE OF CONCILIATORY MOVE WHICH PRIME MINISTER SEDNEY WAS TO PRESENT ON TELEVISION SAME EVENING. SEDNEY DID NOT APPEAR AND IS NOT NOW SCHEDULED TO APPEAR ON TV. ITEMS DISCUSSED AT MEETING REPORTEDLY INCLUDED SIGNIFICANT SALARY IMPROVEMENTS FOR GOVERNMENT WORKERS, ESPECIALLY LOWER PAID CATEGORIES, AND ALSO A NATIONAL CHILD ALLOWANCE PLAN. THE LATTER HAS MORE APPEALANCE OF AN ELECTORAL SOP THAN A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROPOSAL. THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT EASILY OBTAIN THE ADDITIONAL REVENUES TO
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FINANCE SUCH PROPOSALS.

2. IN ADDITION TO DISAGREEMENTS ON FOREGOING, ANOTHER REASON FOR FOUNDERING OF YESTERDAY'S PLANNED CONCILIATORY OFFER IS PROBABLY THAT IT COLLIDED WITH A CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE MEDIATION ATTEMPT, THAT HAS SUPPORT OF THE CHURCHES. SEEMS THAT SINCE BREAKING OFF OF NEGOTIATIONS, CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE HAS BEEN PREPARING A COMPROMISE SOLUTION WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED THIS WEEK. ROUGHLY COINCIDENT WITH CABINET MEETING, 49.-, CATHOLIC DIOCESE AND MORAVIAN CHURCHES ANNOUNCED THAT, WHILE THEIR SCHOOLS WOULD TAKE PART IN TODAY'S CALLING IN OF TEACHERS, THEY WOULD NOT JOIN THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO REOPEN THE SCHOOLS, NOW SET FOR MONDAY, APRIL 2, BUT WOULD "AWAIT THE RESULT OF THE COMPROMISE PROPOSAL". THIS DECISION OF THE CHURCHES NOT TO SUPPORT THE MONDAY SCHOOL REOPENING TOOK THE GOVERNMENT BY SURPRISE AND WEAKENS ITS PLAN FOR A MONDAY SCHOOL OPENING. THE CHURCHES APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT REOPENING THE SCHOOLS WITHOUT AN AGREEMENT TO END THE STRIKE IS TOO RISKY.

3. PROBABLY AS A RESULT OF THE CHURCHES' NEGATIVES TODAY'S TEACHER CALL-IN REPORTEDLY HAS BEEN A FAILURE. THE CHURCHES SUPPORTED THE CALL-IN BUT THE FAILURE TO SUPPORT THE MONDAY REOPENING MADE TODAY'S EXERCISE POINTLESS, AT BEST.

4. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT THAT EDDY BRUMA, HEAD OF THE C-47 LABOR FEDERATION, WILL ACCEPT THE CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE COMPROMISE ALTHOUGH OTHER UNIONS REPORTEDLY ARE SO INCLINED. ALSO, PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS FROM GOVERNMENT SOURCES ARE ALSO NEGATIVE. IMMEDIATE PROSPECT IS POOR, THEREFORE, FOR A SETTLEMENT OF THIS DISPUTE WHICH, AMONG OTHER EFFECTS, HAS KEPT PUBLIC AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS WHICH SERVE 80,000 PUPILS CLOSED FOR 8 WEEKS.
JOHNSTON

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